**To: Galloway Without Pylons**

**A personal and professional perspective**.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to have my say here.
From the outset I would wish to share my bias – this region and specifically where this new pylon route is proposed is where my family and I live, work and play – we chose to be here for the reasons of nature, space, peace, a place to work & develop my artistic business but most importantly a safe place to raise our family.

My **work** as an artist draws inspiration from this largely unspoilt landscape and its myriad of artistic opportunities. The landscape here is my muse – nature’s moods, vagaries and the sheer breadth of natural Galloway glory are what inspires me. Thankfully visitors to the gallery share my passion for this glorious land.

My **business -** The Gallery at Laurieston relies heavily on holiday makers, returning visitors and passing trade from along the wonderful C13 (Laurieston to Gatehouse of Fleet road). The main reasons folk come on holiday to this region are for the natural beauty, history, genealogy root-tracing, space and tranquillity this area affords – we are very fortunate to possess such splendour. The regions entire feel will be, in my opinion, compromised significantly by this unnecessary development. My business therefore relies specifically on the bucolic atmosphere and natural glory of this area – the C13 in many ways represents Galloway, it IS Galloway: its history, journey, isolation, natural treasures, vista’s, flora and fauna and ongoing potential to inspire and attract. BUT it needs protection. This development will compromise this special place.

My **family** - this area is our amenity. Having two boys means physical, outdoors activity is so important. Doing so safely is even more important. This is where we cycle, walk, run, play hide-and-seek, swim, breathe and be. Louise, my partner, is a very busy Consultant Doctor in the NHS running the roads into the forest on the C13 is her way of dealing with the stressors of her difficult profession. She also, as do many others here in the village, horse rides here – how will their safety on our tiny roads be attended to?

Our **home** – when we moved here many years ago, due to Louise’s work as a Doctor, we specifically researched and selected this village and area for its safety and space to raise our children. If we had wanted a home near pylons we would have chosen to purchase a house near them.
Therefore, to have this scheme forced, and it is force - as the vast majority of those with the biggest stokehold here (those of us who live here) completely find these plans anathema and oppose them. This feels like an ugly act of oppression, to mollify shareholders in Iberdrola’s company, to ride roughshod across a beautiful region and to ignore, almost wholly, those who have the temerity to oppose these plans. These plans are also wholly counter-intuitive to Galloway’s plans for National Park status, calling it ‘The Natural Place’ and its attempts (rightly) to become a place tourists will come visit and return to year upon year to bolster our economy and to enjoy.

In **conclusion ,** as an artist my work principally relies on feel, emotion, sense of place and natural glory this development will in my opinion, compromise what I have striven to achieve and understand of these lands. At best this will be a massive despoilment & create years of disturbance and at worst a lasting, damning legacy of destruction in the name of profit over ecology & landscape.
This region despite being utterly beautiful is impoverished with opportunity and relies heavily on tourism and tourist-related activities (my business being a case in point) to manage and survive.
This region fights hard to find its voice and make itself heard – standing against this ‘innovative’ (sic) project protects not only those of us who live, work and play here but also those who choose to holiday and visit here and importantly those with no voice - the flora and fauna - that also chose to live here: the bats, nightjar, newt & other vertebrae, the polecat, the goshawk etc. etc. – this is their home too.

Let’s stand together and oppose these draconian, damaging and anti-innovative plans! This is about profit for ‘fat’ shareholders........let’s protect Galloway.
Let’s say no.

Phil McMenemy – photographic artist and gallery owner – Laurieston, Galloway, Scotland Summer 2018